A DOMESTIC DIFFICULTY.

BY EVELYN EVERETT-GREEN,

Author of "Barbara's Brothers," "Roger's Revenge," "Little Lady Clare," etc.

"'It's your own fault, children,' said Mr. Callender."

CHAPTER III.

COUNTY GAIETIES.

"An invitation from Lady Fitzmaurice," said Mrs. Callender, looking up from a gilt-edged card before her. "Lady Grace is to be married on the 5th of next month, and there is evidently a large party to be given in the grounds afterwards. We are all of us asked. I suppose it will be a very gay affair."

The girls looked rather eagerly at their mother; Claud smiled as if gratified by being asked at the Castle, though like most young men of his age he professed to hold "garden parties" in something of contempt. At the same time he was rather pleased that Ronald should see that they had some good society round them, for he had a vague sort of idea that their guest fancied they led the lives of hermits, and knew nobody beyond the immediate limits of their very lonely parish. For the Callenders were not much given to society. They had not many neighbours, and, as has been said, the young people rather preferred to be left to themselves. Mr. Callender's father had been something of an invalid, and had led a secluded life during his later years, and his son and daughter-in-law had fallen into his habits, and had not after his death made any particular efforts to change them. They were not wealthy, and although they bore a good old name, and could hold their own in the matter of birth with any family about, they had thought it best to keep their quiet habits, and had only made any attempt to renew past acquaintances when their children were growing up, and they realised that it would be better for them to know something more of their neighbours and of the society of their native place.

The Countess of Fitzmaurice was the grand lady of the county. Her husband had property in several parts of the kingdom, so that they were often absent from the Castle (as it was called) for years together; but when she came she always showed herself kind and hospitable to the whole neighbourhood, and generally gave several large outdoor *fêtes*, to which everybody of any social standing was asked. The Callenders had usually gone on such occasions, but the young people had not been old enough to appear often when the family had been at the Castle, indeed, Conny and Charley had not been there at all; so that the idea of being present at this *fête* was a novelty to both, and Charley declared that "he should like awfully to see how the real swells did the thing."

Conny looked inquisitively at a card beside Ronald's plate.

"It looks exactly like the one mother had from the Castle," she remarked, as she caught his eye.

"It is an invitation from Lady Fitzmaurice," he answered quietly.

"Do you know her?" was the eager question.

"I know her a little; it is Castlemain I know the best. We are in the same college—on the same staircase. He was very good to me when I was ill, and he knows I am down in this part of the world."

"Lord Castlemain is the eldest son—the Viscount—isn't he? I saw him play at cricket once. He played very well; but he was only a big boy then. He is quite grown up now, I suppose?"

"He is one or two and twenty, I believe. He is very good at all sorts of games. He plays tennis a great deal. I daresay they will have a good deal of tennis on the 5th."

"Then you must practise if you are going to play," said Conny, who was more friendly with Ronald than any of the others, though she was not aware of it herself. "If you like I will play with you sometimes. It would be a pity for you not to have your eye in."

Ronald smiled and thanked her. He had never asked to join the games so far, and he had never been invited to do so. Although he was now much stronger, he was always treated as something of an invalid, or "muff," as the boys called it, and it was taken for granted that he could not do anything but lounge about in his own room or Mrs. Callender's, or when it was cool enough, in the garden. He took teasing in good part; but he had shown on several occasions a power of quiet repartee, and had sometimes so turned the tables upon his adversaries that the laugh had been in the end entirely at their expense. Charley could enjoy this unexpected development in their quiet guest, and was good humoured enough to enjoy the laugh; but Claud resented it a good deal. He chose to consider that Ronald "gave himself airs," and as Clara always thought as he did, those two were growing absolutely to dislike their guest, and to feel spiteful towards him. They had begun by professing a sort of contemptuous indifference; but they had quickly found that they could not maintain that attitude of mind. Ronald was really too clever for them to despise him long, and there was no denying the fact that his superior good looks, intellectual acquirements, and courtliness of manner stirred up in Claud a good deal of unconfessed jealousy. He was vexed to-day to find that Ronald knew the earl's family better than they did themselves, and he very much wished that something might happen which should put him at a disadvantage in the sight of his fine friends.

So after breakfast he caught Conny alone, and proceeded to give her a fraternal rebuke.

"I say, Con, don't you go and make up to that fellow, playing tennis with him and all that, as if he were one of ourselves. If you give him an inch he'll take an ell, and then there will be no more peace for us as long as he is here. That's the worst of having him for such an awful time. There may be no end to his encroachments."

"I didn't know he had encroached at all," said Conny, opening her eyes in surprise. "I think it seems unkind never to play with him. But I only meant to let him have a little quiet practice before he goes to the Castle. I'll only play singles with him myself."

"And spoil everything," said Claud, impatiently; "I hope you will do nothing of the kind. It would do him a world of good to make an exhibition of himself up at the Castle; I should love to see him do it. He is an awfully stuck-up, conceited prig, and I should be awfully pleased to see him taken down a peg or two."

"I think you are rather unkind," said Conny.

"I think you are an awful little goose to go over to the enemy so soon. Why, he might be a brother for the fuss you make over him. He will think you are falling in love with him next, the conceited young puppy."

It was a very gratuitous taunt; but it made Conny's innocent cheek flame. She had heard of girls who had "flirted" or "set their caps" at this or that young man, and although the thing seemed very horrid to her, she never quite knew what it meant. And now could it be possible that Ronald would think such a thing of her, just because she had been rather kinder to him than the rest? It was quite enough to make Conny shrink back into her shell for the rest of his visit to them. She was at the most sensitive age of maidenhood, and her inexperience of the world, and her inability to compare herself with others, made the careless words of her brother sting her far more than he had intended.

After that she would not for the world have reminded Ronald of her promise to practise with him, and as he did not speak of it again she was the more convinced that he had thought her forward, and had perhaps not wished to do anything of the kind. She now avoided the strolls with him about the garden which they had sometimes taken together early in the morning, or when the dew was falling in the evening and she was watering her favourite flowers, and though she did not know her manner had changed, other people did, and Mr. Callender said impatiently one day to his wife,

"Really, I feel in a great difficulty about that young man. The way our children behave is absurd and almost insulting, and considering the handsome way in which we are paid for having him here, it seems as if we ought to do more for his comfort. Conny has now taken just as much of a dislike to him as the rest, and at first I was pleased to see that she behaved differently. Charley is the most good-natured, but he is such a tease there is no relying on him. I am not at all pleased about it; but where there is no definite ground of complaint it is almost impossible to interfere."

"I feel just as you do about it," answered Mrs. Callender, "but I do not know how to mend matters. Luckily, Ronald has made a friend of me, and I do not think he feels lonely. He has not been used to the companionship of brothers and sisters, and I am not quite certain that he knows how much he is left out in the cold."

"Trust him for knowing," answered Mr. Callender, shrewdly. "He has too much gentlemanly feeling to show it, but he knows it fast enough."

"The girls are very busy preparing for the *fête*," said Mrs. Callender, gently. "Perhaps when that excitement is over they will settle down more comfortably together."

The 5th of August was everything that could be desired, golden sunshine tempered by a light cool breeze from the west, and a thin film of fleecy clouds veiling from time to time the monotony of the noon-tide glare. The girls were busy all the morning putting the finishing touches to their dresses, and gathering the flowers they meant to wear; and very pretty they both looked when they appeared in readiness for the carriage.

Clara affected an artistic style of dressing, and was in pale lemon-coloured washing silk, with puffed sleeves, and a great deal of embroidery of her own making adorning the straight, plain gown, which set off the slim and graceful proportions of her figure to considerable advantage. She was able to make her own dresses, so that she was enabled to spend all her money on getting good material, and, in consequence, was better dressed than she could have been had she been obliged to place herself in the dressmaker's hands. Conny, too, benefited by her sister's cleverness, for her dress had also been fashioned at home; and though it was very simply made, and had none of the elaboration of her sister's, it suited her and fitted her to a nicety, and one person at least of those gathered in the hall thought that she looked absolutely

lovely. It mattered not to Ronald that it was nothing but an inexpensive white Indian muslin, with panels of an old ancestral brocade of palest pink, and that the flowers nestling in the lace at her throat were only the "Duchess of Bedford" rose he had seen her wear a hundred times before. He was of opinion that not a soul in all the gay company that day would be able to hold a candle to her, and he handed her to the carriage with the air of one who does homage to a princess.

He looked "very nice" himself, as Conny said to herself. He was in his flannels, like her brothers, and carried his bat with him. He had a note a few mornings back from the Viscount asking him to make a point of coming "prepared for the fray," and Conny had felt rather self-reproachful at not having fulfilled her promise of a few singles with him. She always pitied people called upon to play before large numbers of spectators when they had no preliminary practice, and was almost surprised that Ronald had the boldness to attempt to play. She knew that Claud was hoping to see him "make a fool of himself," and thought it very unkind, though after what had passed between them she did not dare to say so.

The gardens of the Castle presented an animated spectacle as they drove up, and the guests were conducted straight to the great rosery, where Lady Fitzmaurice was receiving her friends. They were only one small group in a whole crowd of new arrivals, and after a smile of welcome and a hand-shake from the Countess they were free to disperse whither they would; to walk about the garden, listen to the band, eat ices or partake of other refreshment, or to join the spectators round the tennis court, and await their chance of being asked to join in the game.

Mr. and Mrs. Callender were soon called off by old friends with whom they wandered about, leaving the young people to amuse themselves as they would; and now, perhaps for almost the first time in their lives, "the clan" began to wish that they were not such a clan, and that they had taken the trouble to cultivate their neighbours a little more when they might have done so with advantage.

There they stood all together, in their own neighbourhood, but almost strangers to everybody there. Other people were meeting friends at every turn, other people were enjoying themselves vastly, not standing awkwardly together wondering what to do with themselves, but mingling freely with the crowd.

Conny and Charley did not mind. They were pleased and interested by all they saw, and were too young to care about what people might think; but Claud and Clara had reached a sensitive age, and felt that they looked ridiculous, whilst Claud thought that Ronald must be secretly laughing at him. Already he had been hailed by two acquaintances, and he looked far more at ease than they did; and even whilst they were waiting in uncertainty what to do next, a very good-looking youth, who appeared too much at home to be anything but one of the earl's family, came hastily up and clapped Ronald upon the shoulder.

"Here you are, old fellow. I'm awfully glad to see you again. You look a lot better than you did. I've been wanting to come and look you up, but this wedding has put us all in a fluster and turned things topsy-turvy. You must come and stop with us when we have settled down again; but we'll arrange all that later. I want you now to come and play with me. I'm going to challenge the whole company, and we will hold a court against all comers. I said I would if I could find the fellow I wanted. Come on, old chap, there are a lot of adversaries thirsting for the fray."

"You had better find another partner, then," said Ronald, laughing. "I'm not up to form this season; you know I hardly played at all. I was too busy cramming."

"Stuff; your form will beat all the country clod-hoppers. What goes nowhere at Oxford does great execution down here. Why you know how little Simpkins plays, and if you would believe it he and I beat the two 'crack players' of these parts a love sett the other day, and I never had to play up the whole time. Tennis here isn't what it is at the 'Varsity,' my dear fellow."

Ronald walked off with the Viscount, and the Callenders exchanged glances of surprise. Conny laughed without the least malice, but Claud was really very angry, and he would not believe that what he had heard could be true.

"Conceited young puppy," he muttered. "I say, Charley, let us go and see if we cannot thrash them. When we play together we win in nine setts out of ten. I don't believe a word of their conceited Oxford bragging. Come along, do. I'd give anything to beat the pair, and I believe we can too. We know what a muff one of them is, and he hasn't touched a bat for ever so long. If we play up well I'm certain we shall win."

"Well, I'm not certain a bit," answered Charley; "but I on't mind be ing beaten in a fair field, so I'm game. But I wouldn't advise you to try unless you can take a beating yourself good-temperedly; I've always understood that Oxford men who do play are very strong in games of all sorts."

But Claud would not listen or be advised. He knew that he was a very good player as ordinary good play in a quiet country place is accounted, and he was too entirely home-bred to realise, as even Charley could do, how different the standard might be in another place. He took his brother's arm, and walked after the challengers, and as it happened they found themselves first in the field, the other men who had intended playing the Viscount and his partner having meantime engaged one another in a contest.

Lord Castlemain was delighted to match himself and his comrade against the two brothers.

"I've heard you play awfully well," he said, in his friendly way; "and no doubt you know how to back each other up, which is half the secret of success. Shall we give you points, or will you play even?"

Claud was almost affronted at the question.

"We will play even," he answered, saying in his heart, "What conceited asses Oxford men always are!" forgetting for the moment that it was his ambition to be one of the race.

The spectators gathered round the court and the game began. Before ten strokes had been played Claud was aware that this was something different from any style of play to which he had been accustomed. It did not appear as if the Oxford men knew how to miss a ball, and the way they stood in turn near to the net, and volleyed everything back, placing the balls exactly where they would, and always in the most difficult places in the adversary's court, was a revelation of no welcome kind to the complacent country-bred youth.

The brothers were no novices at the game, and were clever and strong and active; but they had not that scientific training which only comes with play constant and regular, and with men superior or equal in prowess. And then Claud, as game after game was lost, began to lose his temper, and with it his head. He played wildly, the spectators grew hilarious, and his irritation increased; and what was really more humiliating than all, he could not help betraying the fact that he had not philosophy enough to endure defeat calmly.

The worst of the aggravation was that Ronald was one of his adversaries, and that he was playing in a form incomparably better than his own. The Viscount was the more energetic player and the more skilful, too; but there was a grace and accuracy about his partner's play that won great applause. Ronald did not exert himself much, but he seemed able to return the balls without exertion, and he never lost the look of playing well within himself, which is the characteristic above all others of the finished player. And this was the youth to whose public discomfiture Claud had been so amiably looking forward for a week or two. Perhaps it was small wonder that he was terribly vexed; but it was a pity he could not hide his vexation from others. It made him look small, and that was perhaps the bitterest humiliation of all.

"Love sett," cried the spectators, as a neatly-placed ball of Ronald's concluded their victory, and the Viscount tossed his bat into the air, and then walked across to talk to his adversaries. But Claud had gone, unable to endure the laugh which his own annoyance had raised, and though Charley responded merrily to the overtures made to him and chaffed Ronald on his "artfulness" in keeping his light so carefully under a bushel, the Viscount could not but go away with the impression that the Callender boys were something of a pair of "unlicked cubs"; the elder got in a rage because he was beaten, and the second was but a larkish sailor-lad, a nice fellow, but no particular companion for him.

So the invitations that reached Ronald after this from the Castle did not always include the Callender boys, and after the family had settled down to their usual life, it was Ronald alone who was asked to spend a week or two with them, and Ronald who began to be better known at the festivities of the summer season than the Callenders themselves.

"It's your own fault, children," said Mr. Callender—when he was in a cutting mood he always addressed his big sons and daughters as "children"—"you have got into a silly, childish way of despising and avoiding other people, and thinking entirely of the fun of the moment, which always prompts young people to keep out strangers, until they have come to take you at your word and cease to care for you. That kind of feeling is very good for a time, and in any case is better than quarrelling, as some brothers and sisters do; but you have carried it a great deal too far, and now you are tasting the consequences of it. I shall be very glad when you, Claud, go to college. It will make a break in your life, and you will learn more sense and manliness. You thought good to laugh at Ronald Kennedy, and call him a muff and milk-sop; but it is easy to see who is most thought of by outsiders, a youth who minds his manners and acts in a simple, gentlemanly way wherever he goes, or a quartet of silly young folks who cannot talk anything but family nonsense, and are always shut up and awkward the moment they set foot out of papa's grounds."

Claud coloured hotly, for he felt the truth of his father's words and it galled him bitterly. He had too much vanity to bear such comparisons easily at any time, and just now, when feeling so bitter against Ronald, he was stung to the very quick.

"I tell you what it is, Charley," he said, "I won't stand this sort of thing much longer. We will do something to show them that this precious new darling of theirs is nothing but a muff at heart. I know he is a muff and a coward both, and I believe I know how we can prove it, too," and leaning towards his brother he began to whisper energetically in his ear.

Charley laughed and said, "All right, if you don't carry things too far." Charley's weakness was his love of a joke, and to him everything his brother had said appealed in that light. He had not seriousness or experience enough to teach him that what is fun to some people is not the same to others; and he, too, though in a more good-tempered way, was a little out of love with Ronald just now. Charley was not spiteful like his brother; but he was careless and sometimes inconsiderate, and easily led away by any plan that promised amusement. He forgot, as so many young people do, that the Christian standard is a high one—to love your neighbour as yourself. "Impossible!" they say, and pass it off with a laugh, thinking that a general good nature is enough; but One Man has proved by the laying down of His own life that such love is not impossible between man and man; and hard though it may be to follow such an example, it is the duty of those who bear Christ's name to strive to do even that.

Had Claud and Charley seen things in this light how much subsequent unhappiness might have been spared!

(Continued on page 145.)

MOTHERS AT HOME.

BY E. M. WATERWORTH.

V.—Our Money—How to Spend and Save It.

MOST of us find it so easy to spend money, that you may be thinking there is not much good in talking about that. But when money is not very plentiful, the question arises how far we can make it reach towards covering us over with the comfortable wrap of *enough*, instead of leaving us shivering with the scanty garment of *too little*.

Just think for a minute what different results you can see for yourself from the same amount of money. You know that Mrs. Brown has just the same quantity to spend in food and clothing that you have, and yet your motherly heart often aches for her little ones so thinly clad in winter. Do you not sometimes get Mrs. Jones to join you when you lay out your club money, "because she seems always to know what is best to buy"?

So you will by observation discover that there is an art in *spending* money, as well as in earning and saving it. Let us start with one maxim which I should like to pin up in every house: *Nothing is cheap unless you really want it.* Dear me, how cross I do get when I am in a shop to buy one thing perhaps, and am bothered for ten minutes before I can get my change, by hearing the praises of various articles which I do not want! Good-natured women are constantly

The Latest Bit of Gossip.

enticed to spend sixpences and shillings which they can badly spare just because "the poor thing seemed so anxious to sell them, you know; and they really were very cheap."

Quite possible; but then, did you really want them? Many a young girl is, I believe, started on the downward road by such little things as these; therefore to all who have young servants I would urge the necessity of helping them to spend their wages, if they have no sensible mother or friend to do it. A girl is persuaded by a persistent will stronger than her own, to buy some bit of finery quite out of keeping with her station or her appearance, if she would look modest and nice. To pay for it she must take money which is really wanted for necessaries; so she wears ragged linen or old shoes, laying the seed of many illnesses, perhaps. She looks smart, but if she could hear the comments of the men most worth pleasing, she would know that none of them would take such a girl for their wife. A good man looks for a woman who will be likely to save his money, not fritter it away in tawdry finery.

As a rule avoid sales, except at shops which you know well. Why should shopkeepers be seized twice a year with a resistless desire to make "alarming sacrifices" for the good of the public? In most cases it is the public who are the willing victims offered on the altar of a silly custom, not the shopkeepers. If a piece of material cost thirty shillings, why should the man want to sell it for fifteen? Take

my advice, and take such announcements for just what they are worth.

In a genuine sale of soiled or old-fashioned goods at a respectable shop, the careful housewife may often pick up a bargain. A piece of good material may be bought for as little as a common one would otherwise cost, and it will only need a little planning to get rid of the damaged part. I don't think anyone need be afraid of such sales; but when you read of tradesmen being suddenly so philanthropic as to give away everything, beware!

That reminds me of another trap to catch the unwary. You are invited to buy so many pounds of tea, and you will receive a beautiful present. Does it never strike the silly purchasers that they must get an inferior article for their money, otherwise how can the man make a living? If you want tea, buy it, and if you want cups and saucers, buy them, but don't pay for sloe-leaves and think you get your china for nothing.

Who does not know the man who comes to the back door (he carefully avoids the front) and wheedles the confiding servants into buying machines and watches? It sounds easy and cheap to say, "You need only pay five shillings a month," and the silly girl gives way, forgetting what a drain on her that monthly payment will be for a whole year, and perhaps not knowing that she will be paying almost double the real value of the article. Anything bought in this way is always dearly bought.

Beware of such men. They seem to live and thrive most amongst the smaller householders, just as sweetstuff sellers do. Their plan is attractive; but why should your hard-earned money be spent in that way? Better far save the money regularly, and then when you have the necessary amount, go to a good shop and buy your machine or watch. But some of you will remind me that it is difficult to save in that way for a special object; you want the money temporarily for something else, and as it is in the house you take it. I know all about that, for I am a wretched hand at saving, myself, finding it far easier to spend a pound than to save one. Now, I would suggest that you should open an account at the Post-office Savings Bank. You can put in a shilling at a time, and save the coppers till they become silver. Keep a little book of your own in which you put down each deposit, and just put against each one what it is for—machine, watch, holiday, sickness—so you will be able to see at a glance how much each fund possesses.

In laying out your money, remember that cheap shoes and cheap hosiery are the dearest in the long run. There are many articles of dress which are rather better for not being too good, though that sounds rather Irish. The man knew what he was about when he shouted on Ludgate Hill, "Doctor's enemies, twopence a pair," and sold his cork soles as fast as he could wish.

Do not forget that the tidy woman will spend proportionately as much on the garments which are not seen as on those which are seen—for where there are rags underneath, and ribbons and flowers outside, it is an abomination.

In making your plan for spending your money do not forget that there are many worse off than yourself, and that you will enjoy the blessings which God has seen fit to give you far more if you feel that you have shared what you could with others less blessed.

Now, as to saving money, you must make a rule for it, though of course there may be times when the rule will have to be broken. Here is a good plan for people who cannot afford to put by much at a time: turn out your purse and pockets on Saturday night, and put away all or half the coppers. Remember that a penny saved is a penny earned. Weekly clubs are splendid things. As one woman in my district used to say, "You see, mum, I don't miss the coppers, and when I gets 'em back at Christmas they're just like a present."

For all who can do so, I would advise putting away some part of the weekly money for amusements and sickness. A new book, a fresh game, a day at the Crystal Palace, an outing in the summer, a run to the sea on Bank Holiday; why should you not prepare for them? We are very much given to anticipating our troubles; why not let us anticipate our pleasures for a variety?

Money worries are about the only ones that I know of which time does not heal, because each week adds another stone to the already heavy burden. To avoid them as far as possible, *spend wisely and save regularly.*

BRIDGET LYDIATT'S IDEA.

BY EDWARD GARRETT,

Author of "The Occupations of a Retired Life," etc.

THERE was always this comfort: there could be no mistake that they were doing their duty.

That was what Nora and Bridget Lydiatt said to each other when distant relatives had been to see them, and sometimes by words, sometimes only by looks and sighs, had reminded them that they were living in a state of things which could not last for ever, and that they would do well to consider what the future must certainly have in store for them.

The Lydiatts resided in a tiny house beside a suburban "Green." Their abode was a survival from the time when the place had been "almost the country," and the little cottage, with its latticed verandah and trailing creepers, looked strangely out of harmony with the garish yellow brick villas which had sprung up beside it. "The Green," however, was an open space which secured a wider horizon than is possible for most suburban homes of the humbler sort. And small as the house was—it had but four apartments and a kitchen—the front room on the first floor was both airy and lightsome.

It was this which had secured the Lydiatts as tenants. "We must have a good bedroom for poor mamma," the girls had said to each other, though then they scarcely knew how very vital a point this was to be.

When they first took possession of this miniature abode they were girls of eighteen and twenty, and their brother Bevan was scarcely fifteen. They had just lost their father, and with him his professional income. He had never been a wealthy man, but his necessary way of life as a country doctor had secured a great deal of comfort and pleasure of a quiet, wholesome sort. They had lived in an old, rambling house, with a large garden, and had been people of consideration among their neighbours. His forethought had secured for his widow an annuity of a hundred pounds,

and there was other property which brought in about another fifty pounds annually. When he died, this was all the family had, and the boy Bevan was still to be started in life, and the widow's health soon began to give her daughters much anxiety.

These were the considerations which had brought them into town. They must be where they could most easily secure special medical advice for her whose life was so valuable to them. And then friends got an opening for Bevan in a London bank, and the mother and sisters felt that the lad was too young to be trusted alone, and, indeed, any attempt to set him forth on his own account would have swallowed up more than the tiny emoluments of his post.

So into town they came, and declared that "Laburnum Cottage" was exactly what suited them; and that, indeed, they could not have had a larger house, since, with their narrow means and many strange expenses coming upon them, the sisters were not only determined to do their own work, but Bridget hoped she might be able to undertake a little daily teaching.

Alas! that was nearly ten years ago, and it was fully nine years since they had known that their mother was a hopeless invalid, whose sufferings could only be alleviated by unremitting attention. Bridget's time was wholly absorbed as nurse and needlewoman, and Nora was cook and housemaid. There were relatives who hinted that it might have been better to hire "a girl" to take one post or the other, and so to release one sister to do something towards her own future. But both Bridget and Nora ignored these hints. Their dear, sensitive mother was not to have a rough or careless stranger for her personal attendant; and Bridget was soon experienced enough to know that a sick-room really requires "a nurse within and a nurse without," and is wonderfully dependant upon reliable cooking and cleanliness, so that the invalid would suffer perhaps quite as much if Nora's loving devotion were removed from the kitchen, as if her own were withdrawn from the bedside.

"I am sure we are doing right," said Nora, "and then, if so, it must come out right in the end."

"And when we were children weren't we always told not to keep measuring the length of the seam that remained to sew, but to keep our attention to the stitch between our finger and our thumb?" laughed Bridget. "Let us take life as God gives it—in short lengths."

They had Irish blood in them, these bright girls. It came to them from their mother's side of the house, and possibly it supplied them with a fund of light-heartedness and humour which might have failed some people in their circumstances.

Mrs. Lydiatt herself had never been brought into close contact with the hard facts of life. The cross by which her nature was to be purified and raised was that of physical suffering. When she saw Bridget turning her old frock, and Nora facing the winter in a thin mantle, she used to grudge the money that went for her meat-essences and doctors' fees. But when she talked about "wearing out her daughters' youth," she brought down on herself such a storm of indignant remonstrance that she learned to keep silence on that head. Often, in her long night agonies, she had prayed for the release of death; but as soon as it struck her that her departure would impoverish the family, she felt ready to make any struggle to prolong her life, and was prepared to endure for half a century.

Nevertheless, in the mother's ignorance of the world, she was able to grasp hopes, which even her daughters, while they held them out to her, could soon scarcely believe in. Bevan would "get on," and they should all be well off again, in time. Or "some day" (that was their euphuism for the misty future which lay behind that grave to which her path of pain was so surely leading), the two sisters would keep a girls' school and make money and retire while they were still young enough to enjoy a little travel. The sick woman and Bridget actually talked over the details of these dreams. They were the fairy stories which beguiled intervals of torture and exhaustion. And in silence the invalid cherished yet another airy castle—her sweet, good girls! they would surely be loved and wedded. The assurance sufficed her, though she felt she could never see the vision fulfilled. For how could they leave her? She knew they would not do it, though how gladly would she have retired to some home for incurables and watched their happiness from afar!

"She has faith for us, and we have faith for ourselves," said Bridget. "I think our faith is wider and vaguer and so deeper than hers—poor dear mamma! Yet what we all mean is that we are sure when God opens a path of duty, He does not block it up with a 'No thoroughfare' at the other end. On one thing I am determined. We won't hang on Bevan and spoil his life. He has been a dear, good boy, and has grudged us nothing that he can give. But he has never liked his city life. He was not made for an office. Except for mamma's illness he would not have stayed in this country. He would have gone away pioneering somewhere. And he said to me the other day that though his salary has gone on steadily increasing to a hundred a year, he does not see how it is to rise higher, except there is some awful mortality among healthy young men scarcely older than himself. Nevertheless, I feel quite sure all our dear aunts-in-law and second cousins will see us get some satisfactory solution of their favourite problem—'What is to become of Bridget and Nora?'" And in another moment she was softly singing the homely hymn—

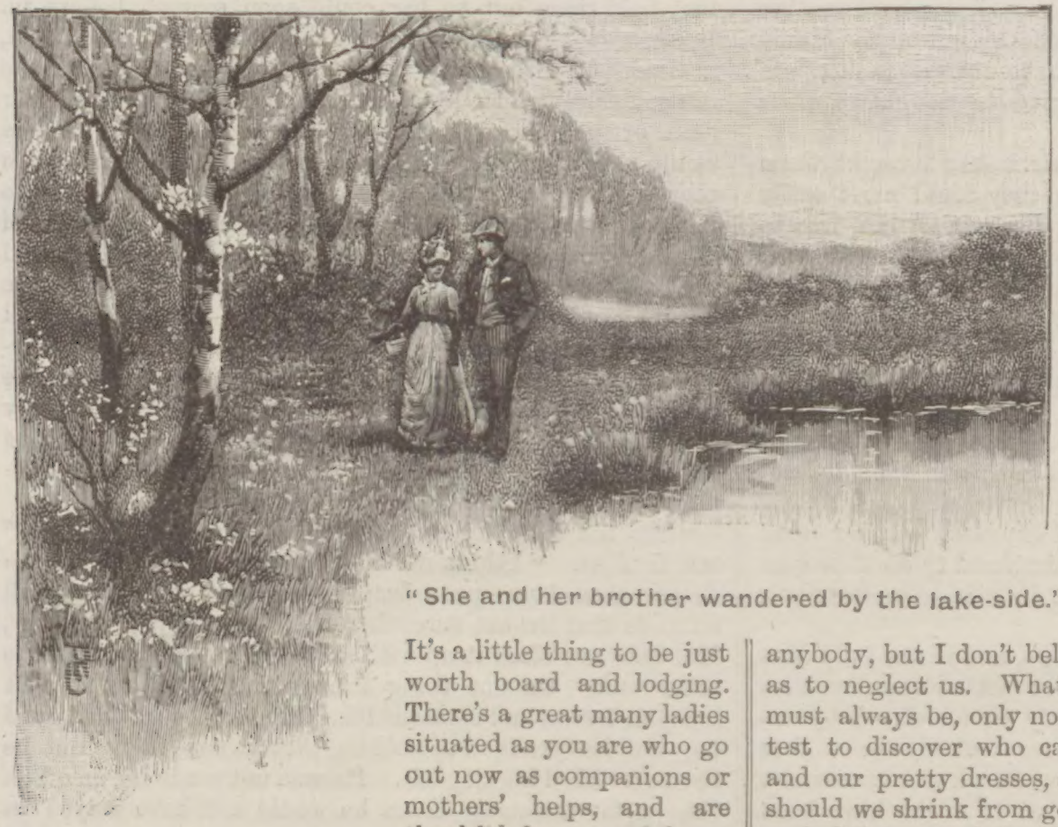
"It may not be thy way,
It may not be my way,
And yet in His own way
The Lord will provide!"

* * * * * *

But the crisis came at last. After all her long illness the little mother slipped away almost suddenly. And, oh, how empty the house seemed! How bitterly the two daughters realised that all helpless as she had been, lying on her bed, her love—her mere life itself—had been a refuge from the strife of the tongues of critical and interfering outsiders. The simple funeral (in which they carried out their mother's wishes) was disapproved of, as were their own plain black dresses, left quite free from the horrible "dust and ashes" of crape. And yet the very advisers who would have liked them to waste their little store on hideous and un-Christian conventionalities were the first to desire to impress upon them all the disadvantages and grinding necessities of their poverty!

"I suppose, now your mother's expensive illness is ended, you could, with Bevan's salary, still go on living and drudging much as you have done; but you shouldn't do it. Your brother may like it well enough at first; but in time he'll want to get married, and then he'll soon let you know that your room is more welcome than your company."

"Of course, you ought not to think of staying together. Let Bevan go into lodgings and shift for himself, and let each of you also look out for number one. Fifty pounds a year between you? Well, it is *not* much; but surely it will be easier for you to get something to do when you needn't ask a salary!



"She and her brother wandered by the lake-side."

It's a little thing to be just worth board and lodging. There's a great many ladies situated as you are who go out now as companions or mothers' helps, and are thankful for a good home without honorarium. Nora must really understand housework as well as any servant. There's many such too, working in missions and sisterhoods that might suit Bridget, as she has had so much nursing. Of course, you are both a great deal too old for any of the appointments in the Post Office or Telegraph Service. It's very sad, but you were both so wilful."

And one friend brought word of a "good opening" for Bridget as companion to a miserly old lady, who "wouldn't think of paying anybody for only doing what any visitor did." And another discovered "quite a mission" for Nora, in the charge of the idiot child of a household where the general servant would be very glad of any assistance she could give.

This was the kind of thing they had to bear. But the poet has told that he or she is blessed whose will is strong, because though such suffer "they do not suffer long," and however much they suffer "they cannot suffer wrong." And while gentler Nora was wondering where a light would be shed or a hand put out to indicate distinctly the new path of duty, the light came to Bridget—in—an Idea!

"In many a country place," she said, "agricultural labourers live, with wives and children, on much less than a pound per week. I don't know quite how they do it. But I've often laughed to hear 'thrift' being urged upon them by people who regularly spend more than that sum in cigars and cab-fares! Yet I do think if they can do it, two well-trained young women can. I don't suppose that, at eight-and-twenty and thirty, even Aunt Grundy will say that we are too young to live alone. And if she does, never mind!"

"But what is to become of Bevan?" gasped Nora, whose first thought for her own life was always in its relation to others.

"Bevan wishes to go abroad," said Bridget, soberly. "He and I have talked it over. He would go at once if he was quite sure we would not suffer, but would be safe and happy. He must go. It is late enough already for him. But where the passion for an outdoor life is as strong as it is in him, sedentary habits are soon thrown aside. Only it means his beginning life over again. We must make up our minds not to take any help from him for a long time. And whatever loose cash may result from the general realization of things, he must have, in addition to any of his own little savings. Some money in hand will be of more use to him than to us, who should settle down at once on our little income, as we mean to go on."

Bridget had made up her mind to return to the place where they had lived in their father's time. It must be owned that Nora faintly demurred. But Bridget overruled.

"There we shall be at least known and understood," she said. "We will not intrude upon anybody, but I don't believe everybody will be so snobbish as to neglect us. What we ourselves have ever been, we must always be, only now we are furnished with a splendid test to discover who came to see our nice drawing-room and our pretty dresses, and who really cared for us! Why should we shrink from going among those who knew us in such different style? We might well do so if we cherished any expectations from them, or wished to fawn on their favour. But we have made up our minds to be as independent as ever we were."

Bridget had thought out their simple financing. Six and twenty pounds a year was to go for general "house-keeping." She knew a quaint old cottage of three rooms, which could be rented for six pounds a year, and that left twenty pounds to provide dress and extras of all kinds.

"It must be done, it can be done, and it shall be done," said energetic Bridget.

Bevan did not leave his sisters till they were settled in their new abode. They kept some of their furniture—the oldest, which was also the dearest to their hearts. The cottage "kitchen" became quite a picture, with the little store of household china made ornamental in a glass cupboard, and the chintz-covered chairs and settle, and the burnished cooking utensils. The two sisters determined to share the larger of the bedrooms, and left the other unappropriated. They were girls with hospitable instincts, and did not like to have no room for anybody but themselves.

"We will have a chamber to offer a friend," said Bridget, "though it may be necessary that such should pay us for their 'board.'" And they told Bevan that the spare room would be ready for him when he had money, and returned home to visit them. And many a time afterwards, when he was "knocking about" on frontier farms and cattle ranches, the vision of its simple purity would rise upon his memory with a hallowing suggestion of home.

The cottage had a rich old garden, full of gooseberry and currant bushes, with two good apple trees and a vegetable patch round the corner. Their old neighbours came to see them, a little astonished and curious, but, on the whole, inclined to commend. The rector's wife sent down some clucking fowls from her own hen-house, "to start them with eggs and poultry," and Bridget took the gift as frankly as she would once have received a present of grapes or peaches.

And when they had fairly got their arrangements com-

pleted, they found they had plenty of leisure. Now leisure with clever, active women can scarcely be unprofitable, either to themselves or other people. It was wonderful how soon they found out that there were many things which had gone undone in that little village, because there was nobody there to do them. For instance, there was nobody to read or talk to two or three bedridden old ladies certainly too poor to hire companionship. Nor was there any experienced sick nurse in the place; and, indeed, there was no money to pay one, unless the Squire had hired her for the public benefit, and so turned the matter into a charity. But Bridget was experienced, and sensible and tender, and her services, free from all thought of cash, were still amply repaid in kindness. The two sisters were consulted about many little matters which were shyly withheld from the more didactic intervention of the rectory. They advised about outfits, they wrote letters for illiterate folk; they introduced more wholesome modes of cooking, and more sensible ideas of dress. Wherever the sisters gave their skill and knowledge, they found those who received their benefits zealously returned them whatever they had, whether it was roots or firewood, a job of carpentering or shoe mending, or a portion "when the pig was killed." Such gratitude made the little income set much more easily. And in the second year of their new life there was no reason why Nora should grudge herself a plain white dress for friendly rural festivities; and Bridget was always a triumphant woman when she saw her sister off, laden with flowers, to return the visits of wealthier neighbours who did not forget to enliven the cottage evening quietude by the loan of books and magazines. "The Lydiatts' cottage is an object lesson of industry and economy set before all the village," said the rector. "And somehow it has also a gentle hint on those matters for the Hall and the Rectory!"

And truly, a bright and useful life was enjoyed by those two young women, veritable "Little Sisters of the Poor," without ceasing to be sisters of each other, dignified in their absolute independence, and dignifying poverty and labour by their cheerful acceptance of them.

It was not to go on for ever. Pleasant and wholesome things seem peculiarly open to change! In the course of time, Nora married an artist, who had come sketching to the village, a gifted man, not likely to be rapidly popular, because he had ideas of his own, and was not inclined to pander to any low standard of public taste. But then Nora was not afraid of a small income, and was little likely to tempt her husband aside from the true bent of his genius. She was quite prepared to stand by his ideals, and to be proud both of him and them.

"Bridget was a triumphant woman when she saw her sister off."

Nora and her husband wished to leave the little income intact for Bridget, that she might, if she liked, go on living in the old way. But changes had been gradually at work everywhere. Bevan was settled on land of his own—a Government grant—and was gallantly fighting to transform a little bit of wilderness into a fruitful field. Bridget resolved to join him. Why should he endure bad food, and a rough, untidy house, while he had a sister who could cook and scrub, and wash and iron? So out she went to the new homestead, quite assured that she was a sufficiently valuable acquisition to run little risk of slighting even from any possible future sister-in-law. And when in the leisurely sunset hour, she and her brother sometimes wander by the Canadian lake-side, talking of old times, perhaps Bridget is inclined to think that the world has still a warm welcome for women who will do the work that the world really wants, and not merely that which an artificial state of society chooses to think "genteel."

A MALAY WEDDING.

SOON after our arrival in Cape Colony we were invited as guests to a Malay wedding. One invitation was sent to my husband, in his official capacity as Field Cornet (I wondered if they wished him to "view the body" of the happy groom?), and one was sent privately, as is the custom here, to all the principal inhabitants. The former was written in good English, and the orthography was correct. It came from the Mohammedan community in our little town of U——. The second epistle was very flowery, and begged the honour and favour of the august presence of Mr. and Mrs. —— at the wedding of the chief priest's daughter.

As we were determined to see all we could see while resident here, we decided to accept the invitation, and repaired, one very hot afternoon, to a large store, which a merchant had kindly cleared out and lent for the occasion. This room must have been fully 100 ft. long by 50 ft. broad. We ascended some rather rickety stairs, and found a very stout and gorgeously dressed man awaiting to receive our cards. He wore a long, beautifully embroidered tunic and robe, and a turban massive with gold thread. He forthwith conducted us to the upper end of the huge room, where we found several Europeans already seated round a table of delicacies. The Mayor and M.P.'s gave countenance to the proceedings, and the former subsequently presented the bride with a handsome locket and chain. Our guide and friend requested us to help ourselves, and brought us some tea. This had evidently been boiled, and sugar was considered very important; for upon tasting it, it reminded us of a syrup. We looked at each other and wondered what we should do. Drinking it was out of the question, so we toyed with our spoons and talked to our "fat man" until he went to receive some other guests. During his brief absence we were *mean* enough to exchange our full cups for empty ones on the opposite side of the table, and when he returned he offered to re-fill them. Needless to say we declined.

We ventured on some curious cakes, which were nice. One had inscribed upon it, in white sugar, "I hope you will enjoy yourselves." We refrained from breaking such a good wish, so left *that* cake alone. There were about a dozen long tables in the room, all similarly laden and profusely decorated. The Malay women looked very gay with their bright-coloured, full silk skirts, which were artfully caught up here and there to display the stiff embroidered petticoat beneath. Each wore a lovely kerchief over her shoulders and another round her head. The latter was brought down to cover the brow. The little girls were similarly attired, and nearly all wore flowers. The boys' hair was as flat as cocoa-nut oil and wax could make it. We found the atmosphere almost intolerable. The smells of various perfumes, hot tea, cocoa-nut oil and cake combined—to say nothing of Malay perspiration, which is indescribable—were indeed overpowering. As we wished to pay our respects to the bride, we could not leave until after her arrival. We enquired whether she was at the mosque—in our innocence imagining that she would be necessary, to say the least, at the wedding ceremony. Our fat man looked horrified at my question, and replied, "The *women* do not go, they stay by the house." We explained we were new arrivals, and so were forgiven for having made such an absurd mistake. From the time we entered the store until we left, the Malays, in contingents, kept on singing—if making a dirge-like, monotonous, wearying noise can be called singing. Not having, at this period, learned colloquial Dutch, we supposed the songs were in Arabic, that being the language used at the mosque; but upon mildly remarking to our guide that no doubt the songs would be very interesting if we could understand Arabic, he stared in astonishment, and thought we were poking fun. I shall never forget the expression on his face, or my "smallness" when he said, "Why, it's all Dutch!" Everyone here is supposed to know kitchen Dutch, and my husband, who was an older resident than myself, and was acquainted with it, I am sure felt ashamed of my ignorance. Presently there was a stir and commotion, and we heard that the bride had arrived. She had been home to change her dress for the *fourth* time. Poor creature, she looked very tired and pale. She was led to a sort of canopy, over which was laid the Union Jack, and behind which was a large mirror, intended to reflect a back view of her dress and beauty! She was now attired in a magnificent brocaded dress, which I was informed had come all the way from Mecca, and was made in Cape Town, over six hundred miles away, because the *best* dressmakers were supposed to be there. She had previously appeared in a beautiful fawn-coloured silk, made by a competent dressmaker in Port Elizabeth, a town some miles away. The bride looked prettier than many Malay girls, being fairer than they usually are. She had fine almond eyes, and was slight in figure. We shook hands with her and wished her all happiness, and then inquired of our friend where the bridegroom was, not having caught sight of him at all. Our fat man answered us to the effect that the bridegroom was a very religious young man, and that probably we should not see him at all, for he was most likely with his friends at prayer at the mosque. We have always understood that marriage was an estate not to be lightly entered into. Evidently this young carpenter was of the same opinion. However, just before we left we saw a quiet-looking, beautifully dressed young man appear at the top of the stair, escorted by several men, to one of whom we were introduced, he being the chief priest, and, as he told

us, the "happy father of the bride." He wore a white turban, signifying that he had made a pilgrimage to Mecca. The bridegroom, arrayed in pale blue satin, had slipped quietly away, as far as he could get from his bride and the crowd around her. He shook us silently by the hand when we congratulated him, and had a very resigned expression.

I remarked to our friend that the feast must have been a costly affair, considering that butter was then 4s. a lb., and eggs 3s. a dozen. "Yes," he said, "it had cost £50, and they all subscribed," and he intimated that visitors could do so if they chose. He regretted they had not had the marriage three months before, when these necessary items were lower in price.

We were privileged in having a peep at the bride's chamber. Everything was gorgeous, the quilt of white satin all embroidered, pillow cases likewise, and all else in grand style. In some instances the expenses of a Malay marriage cripple the young couple for years, but that does not matter so long as they have the gratification of saying they had "a swell wedding." The festivities lasted the whole week, and masters sighed for their employés in vain during that period. We bade our hosts good-bye, and were not sorry to breathe the fresh air again, although pleased that we had been invited to such a novel entertainment.

BESSIE WOOD.

CONSCIENCE AND LITTLE INFIDELITIES.

MANY men are faithful to the moral law, and to the dictates of conscience, in matters of great issue, who are yet guilty of little infidelities that are fatal to true nobility, strict integrity, honour and godlikeness of character. It is not the great and flagrant violations of the law of God that alone destroy the moral rectitude, and the moral sense; the little, and unthought of violations of the law of truth and righteousness have the same effect in the long run. Our inner life ought to be like a perfect mirror, reflecting at every point the law of God in its relation to conduct, to duty, and to the whole economy of life. And we know it is not necessary to break a mirror to pieces to render it absolutely worthless; we may do it with the finest pointed needle in a few moments. Make the smallest line through the silver coating at the back, then another line at right angles, and another in a diagonal direction, then cross and re-cross the lines already made, and in five minutes your mirror will be as worthless as if you had dashed it to atoms.

So it is with conscience. There are comparatively few men who destroy their moral vision, and their moral sense of right and wrong at a blow; but there are tens of thousands whose conscience is so scratched by innumerable little violations of the divine law, that by-and-by it refuses to reflect the light of God.

Some years ago there was a lighthouse erected on a dangerous reef on a tropical shore. The building was a magnificent structure, a triumph of engineering skill, and promised to be a great deliverer from the dangers that lay hidden beneath the calm waters at its feet. But when at night the lamp was lit, the brilliant light drew about it such clouds of insects which populate the evening and night of equatorial lands, that they covered and fairly darkened the glass. There was a brilliant light behind the lens; a light capable of illuminating the darkness, and of vanquishing the night; a light that winds could not disturb, and which clouds and storms could not hide; but the soft wings and gauzy bodies of myriads of insects—each one of which was insignificant in itself—a tiny speck against the golden rays—effectually veiled the light, and made it almost as useless as though it had never been kindled.

The human conscience is God's candle within the breast, meant to light-up the whole course of life with the light of God; meant to show us the jutting crags and the hidden dangers on life's reefy shores. Take care that those little infidelities do not darken its clear lens, and you be lured on in the dark till you become a wreck on the beetling cliffs of vice, dishonesty, impurity, and wrong. You may be strong enough to resist great temptations, and to avoid visible dangers; but the million little insect habits of untruthfulness, false-dealing, and prevarication—unimportant in themselves taken individually—may darken the whole moral being, and lead to the most absolute moral ruin.

This is especially observable in habits of deceit and dishonesty. You may trace the greatest moral depravity back to little habits that were regarded as harmless. A parent says to a child, "Now, that is a white lie!" and hence neither parent nor child thinks much of it. That which is white is supposed to be innocent. A white lie! There is no such thing. Every lie is black with the darkness of the infernal pit. "But you do not suppose that my boy is going to turn out a liar?" Take care, sir; out of just such fair characters crime gets its victims, and vice its slaves. Small beginnings may have momentous issues. Sap the moral sense in regard to truth, and you destroy one of the essential elements of true manhood and true womanhood: you disqualify the soul for its high destiny. And yet many children are trained in habits of prevarication. Here are some examples:—

You are not in the humour to receive visitors: your toilet is not sufficiently elaborate, or your temper not sufficiently sweet, and so when the front door bell rings you say to your servant, "If that is a caller, I'm not at home, mind, Mary." And you screen yourself behind the excuse that others do it. What would you have said if your visitor had left this message with your servant, "Tell your mistress I did not call!" Both equally lies!

You receive your visitor with smiles and blandness. You say you are delighted to see her. You fawn and flatter, and behave as though she were your bosom friend. But when at night you report to your family the social routine of that

day you say, "I had that dreadful woman here again; I really must drop her acquaintance."

Is there any wonder if the children of such parents acquire the habit of lying?

You come home some night saying, "I've done the railway company to-day. I used an old ticket!" Sir, do you know that you have robbed the railway company as much as if you had stepped into the booking-office, throttled the clerk, and run off with the cash-box? You have, moreover, given your boy the first lesson in dishonesty!

It is by these little things that God tests our fidelity. Listen! "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is injust also in much."

God give us all purity of heart that we may mirror in the translucent depths of a clear conscience the image of His own holiness.

W. J. H.

"WHICH THINGS ARE AN ALLEGORY."

ONE summer day went gaily forth,
On play intent, a little child;
His goal a broad expanse of green
Where flowers grew wild.

He clapped his hands in childish glee,
And shouted in a sweet delight—
"O flowers, I love you!" as he plucked
The blooms so bright.

But one, that seemed than all the rest
More fair, his eyes were quick to see;
And, though 'twas far away, "that flower
I'll gain," said he.

So eager was he in his quest
He saw not, midway to the prize,
A patch of cruel nettles, till,
With tear-filled eyes

And smarting limbs, he sudden found
Himself among the stinging things;
Then, from the erst-while happy child,
The cry out-rings—

"They hurt! Oh take my feet from out
These nettles, and I will forego
The flower I craved." And one who heard
Relieved his woe.

Long after, when the child was grown,
He visited the place again
Where nettles flourished, and where he
Had felt their pain.

This time he dared their stinging power,
And, walking in amongst them, found
They fringed a dark, deep cleft, that gaped
And split the ground.

Then, quick retreating, on his knees
He fell, and thanked with all his power
The love that put those nettles 'twixt
The child and flower.

"For if," said he, "the way had been
All plain, then, in my eagerness,
I had not seen the pit, nor lived
My God to bless."

* * * * * * *

So doth the loving Father deal
With all the children of His hand,
Only they are too weak to know
Or understand.

They see the flower, and only that,
Nor heed the peril of the way;
And then God plants the nettle bed
Their feet to stay.

They feel the pain, and cry aloud,
Nor know that God doth send the sting
In truest love, that they may flee
Th' alluring thing,

That would but draw the wanderer on
To depths of ill unknown before,
Whence he would moan and make regret
For evermore.

Friend, has thou sought a lovely flower
That seemed more fair than all beside,
And have fierce nettles intervened
A cleft to hide?

Perhaps thou thinkest still the sting
Was hard to bear, nor canst thou see
Why things should not have been as thou
Had planned to be.

But one day thou shalt know the "why,"
When, looking down from heights above,
Thou shalt discern the pit, and praise
God's wondrous love.

Till then, I fain would say, be brave,
And in this sweet assurance rest—
Thy Father careth; and for thee
He knoweth best.

CHARLES D. MICHAEL

AS IN A MIRROR.

BY EDITH C. KENYON,

Author of "Hilda; or, Life's Discipline," etc., etc.

"TENNIS again, Maudie?" regretfully.

"Yes. Why not?" in tones of indignation.

The first speaker sighed. He was a young and handsome man, good-tempered, too, and very high principled; but his wife had been a spoilt child, and she tried him sorely at times. She was very fond of pleasure and exceedingly self-willed; and she could not understand why his sense of the responsibilities, which the fact of his being a large land-owner entailed, should cause him, occasionally at least, to feel obliged to work when she wanted him to enjoy recreation.

"Maudie," said Harold Venables, now, "we cannot go on like this, business must be attended to sometimes. I told you we could have no more parties this week. The interests of my tenants——"

"Always your tenants, never me," she interrupted, angrily.

"Maudie!"

"You can go and attend to your business. I can entertain my guests alone."

"I have never let you do so. You aren't very strong."

"What matters that so long——"

"Maudie!"

"I tell you I *will* have my party whether you are here or not. *I will.*"

"You must not. I have to ride over some property with my steward."

"'I saw it all as in a mirror,' she said." *p.* 142.

But Maud Venables was not listening; hasty, passionate words were falling from her lips, expressive of regret that she had exchanged her girlhood's freedom for what she was pleased to term slavery, resentment that he should demand compliance with his wish, and anger, which she thought just, against his selfishness, as she called it.

"Maudie," in a tone of intense grief; then his face was hidden in his hands for a moment, ere he turned away.

The young wife burst into tears after he had gone.

"Don't kye, mamma," said one of the two small boys of three or four, who had watched the scene with wide-open, wondering eyes. "Don't kye. Me'll buy you a tennis-party. Me's got a shilling."

"Me, too. Naughty papa," said wee Dickie, lifting his face to be kissed.

"Oh, hush, dear," said their mother. "You must not talk in that way. Harry, Dickie, go to nurse at once."

The children ran away, and their mother cried a little longer. Then she rose, dried her tears, and sat down to write the invitations to her tennis-party; not without some qualms of conscience as she did so, but she told herself she was not going to give in; so the invitations were written and sent. That was on Monday. Mr. Venables did not allude to the subject again, and neither did his wife, though she quietly gave the necessary orders to her servants to prepare for the party. On Tuesday they went to a large flower-show, which Mr. Venables had long promised to take Maud to. He was calm and kind.

The next morning he rose early, and his wife heard him order his horse, and let him ride off without once naming the party.

All the morning she felt miserable, and wished a hundred times the day was over. Having never entertained guests alone, even a tennis party seemed very formidable to her.

In the course of restless wanderings about the house, she visited the nursery and found her little boys quarrelling.

"I s'all, Harry!"

"Oo s'an't, Dickie!"

"I s'all."

"Oo s'an't."

Screams followed; then a struggle; a little hand raised in anger; a fall; a blow against the corner of the door.

"Children, what was it all about?" asked Maudie, sorrowfully, as she bathed a bleeding head.

"I wanted to have a party for my dolls, and—and I invited his dogs," sobbed Dickie.

"And I wanted to go ridin' like papa," sobbed wounded Harry.

"And wouldn't one of you give up to the other?" asked the mother, feeling a strange pang at her heart.

"I wouldn't, cos a doll's party's nice!"

"And I like ridin' best."

"But you couldn't *both* have your own way. Why didn't *one* of you give in?" asked Maud, and then burst into tears, feeling quite unable to rebuke conduct so like her own.

At three the guests arrived, and Mrs. Venables, looking pale and timid, received them for the first time alone. Her husband had not returned to luncheon. She feared he was very angry. Chatting with her visitors, enlisting the services of gentlemen to arrange the setts, presently pouring out and dispensing cups of tea to the tired players, had all to be done with that weary, gnawing dissatisfaction with self and dread of she knew not what within her heart. Then, very late, he arrived, and, crossing the lawn in haste, stood once more before her.

"I'm so sorry, my dear, I couldn't come before," he said; "I've been working since early morning, in order to spare time to be with you this afternoon, yet I couldn't finish the business sooner."

"How good you are! And I—I have been so wrong. I'm very sorry, Harold. The children have taught me a lesson. They've been quarrelling, and I—I saw it all *as in a mirror*," she said, "and how bad my conduct was. I'll *never* be self-willed again."

Harold Venables admired his wife at that moment more than he had ever done before, for he knew what an effort it must have cost her to speak like that, and honoured her courage in doing so. But he only said merrily, as he gave her a loving glance, "We shall *enjoy* some tennis now, Maudie! Come on."

And they did enjoy their tennis; and Maud never quarrelled any more.

THE REIGN OF BRAIN.

GENERALLY speaking, the great difference between civilized and uncivilized man is the difference between brain and muscle. Power in the one case is conferred by mental attainments, in the other by physical strength. The giants that we read about as being so useful in a primitive state of society would be out of place in an advanced community like our own. They would be awkward on a locomotive for instance, and in time of war they would have the disadvantage of running a double risk of intercepting bullets. In short, we have no suitable work for them. Brain has reduced the uses of physical strength to a minimum. In a contest with science these ancient giants would be nowhere. Brain can perform feats with a lump of coal or a few pounds of gunpowder surpassing what has ever been accomplished by mere human strength.

The reign of brain is so absolute now that the organ which is universally regarded as the organ of mind, deserves all the study which can be given it. If a heavy brain is not always a certain indication of mental capacity, there can be no doubt that a brain which falls below a certain minimum standard of weight implies idiocy on the part of its unfortunate possessor. M. Broca places the lowest limit of brain weight compatible with human intelligence at 37 ozs. in males, and 32 ozs. in females, the average brain weight of Europeans being about 49 ozs. But whether a big head contains more intelligence than one of less size is a question which, at least, admits of discussion. One thing is clear, that some persons, though they possess heavy brains, do not show a corresponding wealth of mental endowments. Dr. Peacock, who weighed one hundred and fifty-seven brains of adult Scotsmen, found that four, all belonging to artisans, were over 60 ozs. each, and yet, so far as could be learned, they had not been distinguished beyond their fellows for intellectual endowments, while the heaviest brain on record, which weighed 67 ozs., belonged to a bricklayer. Dr. Morris, the chronicler of the last case, was informed that this man "had a good memory, and was fond of politics; but that he could neither read nor write." Instead of having been a champion of light and leading as we should expect, "it is evident," says Dr. Morris, "that his acquirements were not great." Possibly he lacked the opportunities that would have developed his potentialities. Although he made such poor use of it, his brain capital may have been unprecedented, for results are not an infallible criterion. One man starts in life perhaps with a capital of half-a-crown, and turns it into a large fortune, while another who begins with thousands of pounds, never manages to increase that capital to any extent. The big-brained bricklayer's obscurity may in all probability be attributed, not so much to a want of capacity for learning, as to an absence of the conditions necessary to its growth. This theory is at any rate supported by the fact that among the educated and intelligent classes large brains are far more common than among the uneducated and less intelligent. The proportion of brain-weights above 55 ozs. has been ascertained to be only from 4 to 6 per cent. in the latter class, while the proportion among men who have achieved intellectual distinction is at least 23 per cent. Unfortunately the brain-weights of only 23 such men are accurately known, and from them the above calculation has been made. With few exceptions, they exceeded the average capacity of 49 ozs. Cuvier, the celebrated naturalist, stands at the top of the list, his brain weighing 64½ ozs., while next in order comes the famous physician, Abercromby, and the poet Schiller, each with 63. Goodsir, the anatomist, follows with 57½, Sir James Simpson with 54, and Chalmers with 53.

In the case of eminent living men we must accept measurements in lieu of weights. Some years ago "Who's your hatter" was a saying that had great popularity for a time, but nobody seemed to take the trouble of tracing its meaning, and perhaps it was supposed to have no meaning. However, there is a good deal in the question, for it appears a man's hatter knows one of his secrets that is worth something. The public have now become enlightened through the hatter fraternity as to the brain capacity of prominent statesmen and men of letters. Should either Mr. Gladstone or Lord Salisbury be called a "muff," or even worse, by political opponents, both of these gentlemen may comfort themselves with the reflection that their hatters will vouch that they possess more than an average quantity of brains.

Presuming that what is known to the trade as size 7 fits the average head, it appears from one list that out of fourteen persons whose hat-sizes are given, two, Lord Chelmsford and Dean Stanley, were below, while other two, Lord Beaconsfield

and the Prince of Wales, were up to the average. Dickens, Selborne, and Bright, took 7⅛; Earl Russell, 7¼; Lord Macaulay, Gladstone, and Thackeray, 7⅜; Louis Philippe, 7¾; and the late Archbishop Thomson, 8 full! These were all simply born to be leaders in their respective lines, and they may be taken as examples of the reign of brain. On the other hand, a person whose head is below the average size must not be presumed to have "nothing in him." The brain-weight of Hermann, the philologist, was decidedly below the average, which bears out the opinion of Dr. Bastian, that "a well-constituted brain of small dimensions may be capable of doing much better work than a larger organ whose internal constitution is, from some cause or other, defective." At the same time, it seems to be an established fact that a big brain, if thoroughly healthy, is superior to one of less weight.

Hatters some time ago gave rise to the alarming intelligence that heads were growing smaller. From a discussion, conducted in *Nature*, it appeared that, whatever may be the tendency as regards heads, hat sizes have undoubtedly shown a downward tendency within the last thirty or forty years. In other words, the demand for the larger sizes has been decreasing, with a corresponding increase in the demand for smaller sizes. One hatter's experience ran that where only one hat was required, at or under 21½ inches, he now requires seven; and where formerly four of the largest sizes were required, he now only needs one. But great changes have taken place in fashion since forty years in the mode of wearing both hat and hair. The hat in those days was pulled well down over the head, so far, indeed, that it was customary to attach a piece of cloth to the under side of the brim to take the friction off the coat collar, while the hair was worn thick and long. The close clip at present in vogue, along with the manner in which hats are now worn, would seem to be a sufficient explanation to account for a decrease in the size of hats, without assuming that heads are any less, and the probability is that they are even larger.

It is a well-known peculiarity of the human body that exercise develops the part or parts specially exercised. This law we may reasonably suppose applies to the brain as much as to any other organ. And through the spread of education, a necessity of our times, because advancement comes to be a matter of mental superiority, brains were never exercised so much as they are now. Indeed, research proves that in a progressive civilization the cranial capacity of the population is increasing, not diminishing.

A few years ago, while digging the foundation of a new building in Paris, a vault was alighted upon containing a large number of human skeletons, whose surroundings proved them to have lived not later than the twelfth century. M. Broca, taking advantage of such a rare discovery, found the average capacity of 115 of those twelfth-century skulls-to be 1,426 cubic centimetres; while another series of skulls taken from a cemetery belonging to the early part of the present century gave an average of 36 cubic centimetres more, thus showing that the average Parisian skull had increased its dimensions considerably in seven centuries. The following figures show that the average brain-measurement of a people indicates pretty clearly the extent of their civilization, or whether they are civilized at all. The brain capacity of the European is 94 cubic inches, against 91 in the Esquimaux, 85 in the negro, 82 in the Australian, and 77 in the Bushman. These are merely averages.

When we come to consider the lower races, it is noteworthy that individuals of the same sex have less variation in their cranial capacity than is found among the higher races—they stand much more on a level. If we take modern Parisians, large and small skulls vary among them by about 600 cubic centimetres, while negro skulls vary only by 204, and ancient Egyptian by 353. The influence of mental exercise on the brain is forcibly conveyed by the difference which exists between the brain-weight of men and women, a difference which, according to Prof. Bischoff, of Munich, amounts to 10½ per cent.

Among all races men appear to be the bigger brained, although among the lower races the two sexes are more nearly equal in cranial capacity. Difference of stature no doubt accounts for a great deal, as a tall person should have a heavier brain than one less in height. Still, a large margin remains in men's favour, and this can only be accounted for by remembering that at least until lately women refrained from engaging much in enterprise and brain work, which were supposed to be the exclusive fields of men. When, as among the lower races, women and men are engaged more or less in the same pursuits, the difference between them in cranial capacity is not nearly so great. Le Bon estimates that the difference between the average capacity of skulls of male and female Parisians is almost double that between the skulls of the male and female inhabitants of ancient Egypt.

If civilization promotes brain development, considering the long period that China has been under its rules, we should expect the Chinese to be a large-headed race. And so they are. A few years ago the brain-weights were ascertained of eleven adult males and of five females, with one exception belonging to the coolie or lowest grade of Chinese society, who had been the victims of a typhoon at Hong-Kong, and the average of the males reached 50½ ozs., and of the females 45½ ozs., an average exceeding that of the European by 1½ oz., the negro by 6 ozs., and the average Scotsman by ½ oz. It might be urged that the Chinese being bigger-headed than any other people at present known should therefore occupy the first rank in civilization. The extraordinary cranial development of the Chinese, however, instead of resulting from high culture, has been produced through many centuries of stagnant civilization, that seems in the end to have paralyzed their mental energy. A small, active brain is better than a bigger one, which is dormant. But were the heads of the British people really growing smaller, it would mean that the reign of brain is coming to a close, and that we are slowly and surely drifting towards barbarism, a view, with the evidence around us, too absurd to be entertained for a moment.

The comparatively cool mornings and evenings are once more reminding us that the beautiful and too brief days of summer are nearly at an end, and one of our first thoughts is the necessity to prepare for the change of season. For this reason we would, this month, turn our readers' attention to a few seasonable hints on useful dressing gowns and jackets. Perhaps never before has there been so great a variety in the former article, and young ladies, with plenty of time at their disposal, never had a better opportunity of displaying taste, and making a dressing or morning wrap gown ornamental and graceful. No one need be afraid to attempt making dressing gowns. They are not so difficult to make as dresses, as it is not so necessary for them to fit to the figure so accurately, the loose fronts being invariably drawn in by a girdle or band. We give here two sketches; the first (Fig. 26) is composed of dark red flannel, and can be lined with flannelette, which should not be made as tight fitting as a dress lining, though tight enough to be neat. If desired, it may be as well to make the lining separate, so that it can be tacked in and removed in warmer weather. The fronts should be cut wide enough to allow for smocking, which is done in two sets, with a band (or plain piece) of embroidery between. The fulness given to the skirt by the Watteau back is smocked to about 6 in. from the neck. Should there be any difficulty with the smocking, gathers can be used instead. The pockets, cuffs and front of collar are embroidered to match the fronts. An embroidered waist-band, brought underneath the Watteau, encloses the waist. The silk here used for smocking and embroidering is the same shade as the material, but a contrasting shade is generally preferable for young ladies' gowns. The sleeves are cut rather full at top to give the high shoulder effect. The Medici collar is cut high at the back of neck and gives the gown a comfortable appearance. Eight yards of flannel are required for the making of this gown.

Fig. 26.

Fig. 27.

Fig. 27, here shown, is made in the Princess style. The pattern is equally suitable for dressing gowns, tea gowns or morning dress, the only difference being that the tea gown should be more elaborately trimmed. If cashmere, or any other light material is used, the gown should be lined throughout with silesia or sateen. This pattern is likely to be very widely adopted during the coming season, as it will be remembered to have been held in high favour some few years since. It is made of navy-blue cashmere, trimmed with a broad white military braid. The back fits nearly close to the figure to about four inches below the waist, where it is cut full and gathered so as to give sufficient fulness to the skirt. The sides are also tight fitting, the fronts being cut full and pleated from the neck, the material being cut three inches longer than the lining to allow for the bag front, which falls some four inches below the waist. Six yards of cashmere and the same quantity of braid will be sufficient for carrying out this design. Flannelette is often introduced with success for gowns; two colours that blend well being used with great effect; grey and pink forming a charming contrast for young girls. An old dressing gown may do good service as a lining to a sateen one for winter morning wear, and is preferred by many ladies, as dust can be brushed off it more easily, and the warmth, of course, being equally great.

Capes are very useful in place of jackets for young girls. They should be made very full, like those of an infant's pelisse, cut on the cross, a frill, also cut on the cross, of about three inches depth being gathered round the neck, down the fronts and on the hem round the bottom. The cape is simply fastened at the throat with strings or button and button hole.

Flat patterns can be supplied, price 6½d. each. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.